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Liz Dowell

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# Library panel to inform students on Dust Bowl

By Liz Dowell

Copy Editor | @DEN\_News

Booth Library will have a panel titled "Illinois Plow and Breaking the Plains: Technology, Ecology and Agricultural Production during the 1930s" on Wednesday.

The panel is a part of a bigger exhibit in the library called "Dust, Drought, and Dreams Gone Dry."

Debra Reid, a professor of history, will be talking about Illinois agriculture during the panel.

The focus on the panel is how the bulk of the problem that caused the Dust Bowl was the type of agricultur-

al machinery used on the Plains.

"You have to have equipment to harvest or its not reasonable to plant so much grain," Reid said. "The real issue is that over production is just one component of a series of things that happened to make it an ecological disaster."

Reid said one of the things that could have been a part of what caused the Dust Bowl, besides over planting and harvesting, was the change from using a plow behind a mule to using tractors.

The tractors that were used on the Great Plains were manufactured out of Illinois.

"But what happened is a lot of the equipment was manufactured from companies in Illinois," Reid said.

Reid also said Caterpillar Inc. was one of the main companies that was mentioned in the 1940 film "The Grapes of Wrath." Reid said even though the Dust Bowl is associated with Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, Illinois also felt some of the effects.

"There were massive floods on the Mississippi here during the Dust Bowl," Reid said. "There were consequences of too little rain here, but it had nothing like the magnitude of the Great Plains."

Janice Derr, the program coordinator, said students should be encouraged to attend the seminars because not many students know about the Dust Bowl.

"I don't know really if this is something that students know a lot about," Derr said. "If you mention the Dust Bowl, I don't know if students could really tell you a lot about the Dust Bowl. I think it's a time period that we don't know a lot about, and again I think a lot of people associate it with that (Western Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas) part of the country. They don't think it affected other parts of

the country."

Derr said it is almost impossible to have a natural disaster as big as the Dust Bowl not affect anywhere else.

"We can't have a devastating event like this happening in one part of the country and it doesn't affect other parts," Derr said. "Even just this idea that the dust was across this entire country, and I think that's something that people don't know about; I didn't know that when I started on this project."

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